



The Corky McMillin Companies

October 26, 2022

City of Chula Vista
276 Fourth Avenue
Chula Vista, CA 91910

RE: Christopher Columbus Statue

Dear Members of the Chula Vista City Council:

As you know, the McMillin Family and The Corky McMillin Companies have deep roots in Chula Vista, as the homegrown developer and builder of many masterplanned communities within the City and surrounding areas, as well as many philanthropic efforts throughout the community.

The Christopher Columbus statue was created for the new Discovery Park in McMillin's Rancho Del Rey in the early 90's, and we thought it important to share with the committee and City leaders the history of its commissioning through the personal recollections of Sandy Perlatti, our long-time executive marketing director, in her attached memo.

Because of our history with its creation, we're very interested in its future. As an option, if the City is unable to find a suitable home, we'd like your consideration to be the recipient of the statue for a permanent home on private property in Bonita.

Respectfully,

MCMILLIN COMPANIES



Vincent G. Ferrer
Executive Vice President

Personal Recollections regarding Christopher Columbus Statue in Discovery Park, Chula Vista, CA

Scott,

When I returned to McMillin in January, 1990 from my short hiatus working for Home Capital and the Baldwin Company, we were in the final stages of planning the Grand Opening of Rancho del Rey. Prior to my arrival, Rick Davidson had worked very hard and passionately on the theme for the master-planned community. The creative team wanted to tie Rancho del Rey (Ranch of the King) to the history of the land and to identify with classical Spain's architecture. They also realized that the 500-year anniversary of Christopher Columbus's discovery of America was coming up in 1992. At that time, I believe the creative team to include Gary Meads (Knoth & Meads Advertising Agency), Jim Frampton of Jim Frampton and Associates and Bob Young of Motivational Systems, Inc. I believe ONA was our master-planned landscape company.

The sculpture by Mario Zamora was to be the centerpiece of Discovery Park which celebrated the 500-year milestone since Christopher Columbus discovered America. The dates of 1492-1992 were on the bronze plaque installed with the statue. We paid in excess of \$100,000 for this lovely bronze statue and it breaks my heart that it has been vandalized and threatened for destruction.

Mario Zamora came to our office during the process of creating the statue. He wanted to make sure we had the proper instructions for installing the statue. As I remember, he did not speak English and we had to have a translator. The decision was to show Columbus as an explorer, a discoverer of the new land and thus the name Discovery Park. The emphasis was to be on Christopher Columbus as an explorer and not the highly decorated hero he became once he returned to Spain following his conquest. At this point in time, I don't believe there was any controversy regarding Christopher Columbus and his contribution to history. Mario Zamora created a small-scale version of the statue for us to approve prior to creating the large, permanent version. It was in Corky's office for many years.

Our Community Relations department visited the nearby schools and the students created the colorful tiles that were installed on a dedicated bench in the park. The students were asked to create the tiles with the discovery theme and many of them were depictions of the ships that came over with Christopher Columbus.

We were always very proud of the marketing of Rancho del Rey and won awards for the park, the information center, the brochure, advertisements and public relations campaign.

The Grand Opening involved guests picking up a mock passport and having it stamped at each of the current selling projects within Rancho del Rey and then turned into the Information Center for a drawing. The grand prize drawing was held for an actual "trip to Spain".

I think it would be nice to see if there is an institution that would like the statue that is affiliated with discovery and history that would not consider the statue to represent the negative aspects of the conquest that are at this point in time so controversial. Do you think the San Diego History Center would consider having it? Just a thought.

Carolyn and Joe Shielly have stayed in touch with Rick Davidson if you would like to reach out to him for his personal memories of creating the theme, etc.